

APhA2006 Fills Your Need to Know

Sign Up for the Financial Planning Strategies Workshop

APhA2006 is fast approaching! Be sure you're "in the know" by attending the Annual Meeting in San Francisco, March 17–21. It's a high-energy learning environment that's ideal for new and seasoned practitioners alike. And with New Practitioners receiving 50% off the regular registration rate, you simply can't afford to miss this opportunity! Be sure to register at the early bird rate by February 15 at www.aphameeting.org.

Here is what is on tap for New Practitioners in the City by the Bay.

Saturday, March 18

Cure Your Student Loan Debt

Convention Center, Room 3022
2:00 pm–3:00 pm

Did you know most PharmD graduates owe approximately \$800 per month in student loan debt? APhA has a special program to help you manage your student loan debt and get cash back! New Practitioner and final-year student pharmacists are invited to attend this special session. Come learn about this new program and get your questions answered by a personal loan consultant. Sponsored by the College Loan Corporation.

APhA New Practitioner Network Coffee Talk

Convention Center, Room 3022
3:00 pm–3:30 pm

Drop by for a caffeinated discussion with fellow New Practitioners and presenters from the afternoon educational session. This is a good opportunity to meet the presenters and ask questions in a more informal setting. Sponsored by the College Loan Corporation.

APhA New Practitioner Network and Postgraduate "Just Desserts" Reception

Hilton San Francisco, Continental Ballroom Parlor 3, 8:30 pm–10:00 pm

Save room for dessert on Saturday night, as ice cream sundaes, French pastries and tarts, Ghiradelli chocolate squares, and international coffees will be on the menu during this relaxing reception. Recent pharmacy school graduates (within the last five years) will want to attend to catch up and network with fellow colleagues. And great prizes will be given away! A cash bar will also be provided.

Sunday, March 19

APhA New Practitioner Network Financial Planning Strategies Workshop

Convention Center, Room 3014
11:00 am–12:30 pm

Today's busy New Practitioner needs important, up-to-the minute information on money matters, and a financial planner will provide the advice during this essential session. Lunch will be provided. Sponsored by the Rite Aid Corporation.

Please sign up at <http://fs8.formsite.com/APhA-ASP/NPLuncheon/index.html>. Space is limited!

APhA New Practitioner Network "Night on the Town"

Suite One8One, 181 Eddy Street
10:00 pm–1:00 am

Whether you are looking to trip the light fantastic or just chill, you will want to take an "Annual Meeting breather" at Suite One8One, downtown San Francisco's premier nightclub. All your friends will be checking into the Suite, so come on out and enjoy yourself. Sponsored by the Rite Aid Corporation.



Important APhA2006 Information!

- Early-bird registration and guaranteed rate hotel arrangements end February 15. Sign up now at www.aphameeting.org!
- New Practitioners enjoy a 50% discount from the regular registration rate.
- Pre-registration for Friday Special Skills Workshop and Certificate Training Programs is required. Sign up by February 15.

Monday, March 20

New Practitioner Network Open Forum

Convention Center, Room 3022
10:30 am–11:30 am

New Practitioners have questions, concerns, and of course, opinions about the issues they face in the real practice world. Recent graduates can have their say about today's hot topics at this open discussion and weigh in on APhA House of Delegates policy statements and new business items. This is a good opportunity to hear what is happening in pharmacy practice outside your state and meet fellow New Practitioners.

New Practitioner Network Exposition Hour

Exhibit Hall, 11:30 am–12:30 pm

This is the perfect opportunity for New Practitioners to stroll through the Exposition and visit with exhibitors. The hour will conclude with a special New Practitioner prize drawing, which will take place at 12:30 pm at the APhA Center, Booth #501. An entry form can be found in your official *New Practitioner Network Guide*.

Career Profile

Lt. Mark W. Sellers, PharmD
USPHS Staff Pharmacist
Indian Health Service

It is my wife's fault that I am a pharmacist. She is a clinically-trained pharmacist and after consistently comparing our work days, I found myself intrigued by the way she was able to make a difference in people's lives, not to mention the fact pharmacists could go anywhere in the country and find a job. It wasn't long before I was on my way to pharmacy school, where I was introduced to the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps, a health professions uniformed service.

After operating a nuclear reactor on a fast-attack submarine in the U.S. Navy for 6 years, I had an appreciation for the uniformed services and their integral role in the country's well being. It was this experience, combined with my newfound pharmacy career, that got me interested in the USPHS.

Taking the Initiative

Following my first year at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, I completed a Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Externship Program (JRCOSTEP) with the National Institute on Drug Abuse in its research pharmacy in Baltimore. This experience offered a glimpse into the clinical research side of drugs and their effect on animals and humans. The next summer, I did a JRCOSTEP at the Indian Health Service (IHS) Headquarters in Rockville, Md., and it was there that I developed my keen interest in serving Native Americans in "Indian Country," often in remote and beautiful areas of the United States. During this particular JRCOSTEP, I was able to visit several IHS sites in Oklahoma to observe innovative pharmacy practice, which is what the IHS is known for within the pharmacy profession.



Lt. Mark W. Sellers

As part of my experiential rotations in pharmacy school, I arranged a rotation with the IHS hospital in Shiprock, N. Mex., which serves a small portion of the Navajo people. The rotation was a tremendous experience because I was able to participate in patient rounds, work in the outpatient pharmacy department, and actively participate in a pharmacy-managed anticoagulation service and seizure clinic. The seizure clinic consisted of pharmacists working with a staff neurologist in assessing patients and ensuring proper medication use. This experience substantially reinforced my desire to begin my USPHS career and make a difference in people's lives. Shortly after returning from New Mexico, I applied for and was accepted into a Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Externship Program (SRCOSTEP) for my last year of pharmacy school. This program allows a student to be a commissioned officer on active duty with all the pay and benefits of a full-time commissioned officer while completing a professional degree, with time owed to the sponsoring agency (in my case, the IHS facility in Red Lake, Minn.) upon graduation.

Memorable Experiences

My current position for the last 2 and a half years has been as a staff pharmacist at the USPHS Indian Hospital in Red Lake. The hospital serves the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe Native Americans through outpatient (family practice, women's health, and pediatrics), inpatient, emergency services, dental, mental health, and extended care

services. I thoroughly enjoy the varied and interesting work environment and being an integral and valued member of the health care team. It has also been exciting to be a leader in the implementation of an electronic health record, Computerized Prescriber Order Entry (CPOE) system, and ScriptPro automation at our facility. We are currently initiating anticoagulation services and identifying other areas where pharmacy services would have the greatest impact in improving patients' overall health. Provision of care for this patient population is always challenging because of the need to have an extensive knowledge base of treatment modalities for the many disease states encountered. This practice setting offers experiences a pharmacist would not get elsewhere in the profession, yet are invaluable in professional and personal development.

One of the tragic occurrences I had the misfortune of experiencing was the Red Lake High School shootings in March 2005. The majority of the victims were brought through our emergency department before being transferred to major trauma facilities. I assisted others in the emergency department in implementing code procedures and other life-saving measures. I witnessed things that I never believed I would in my entire life, much less pharmacy career.

Another interesting experience was my 2-week deployment to Nevada-One Augmentation Team in Gulfport, Miss., in response to the public health emergencies in the aftermath of the numerous hurricanes in 2005. Nevada-One was a field medical hospital—much like that shown on the television show "M.A.S.H."—that provided ambulatory and special needs inpatient care to hurricane victims whose health care infrastructure was devastated following Hurricane Katrina. To be able to assist fellow Americans who are truly in need will always be one of the most memorable experiences I have ever had.

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A Perfect Match

Because doing something different has always been an interest, the IHS was a perfect match for me and may be for you as well. If you have the initiative, almost anything is possible in an IHS pharmacy career. The IHS offers a competitive salary and benefits packages, including loan repayment, a sign-

on bonus, full medical benefits for you and your family, and a guaranteed pension, just to name a few. Pharmacy career opportunities with the USPHS are tremendous, as pharmacists can work for agencies such as FDA, the Bureau of Prisons, the Coast Guard, the National Institutes of Health, CDC, and many others across the country and abroad.

If any of the above interested you, then I highly recommend you contact the USPHS (www.usphs.gov) for more information about how you can get started on a career full of rare and professionally-rewarding experiences today. Or, e-mail me with your questions at mark.sellers@mail.ihs.gov.

Manage Your Student Loan Debt AND Get New APhA Benefits!



APhA understands that new pharmacists like you may have significant student loan debt resulting from your recently completed PharmD degree. You even may be having a difficult time managing your finances and your pharmacy school debt on a starting pharmacist's salary. APhA has a new program to help you manage your student loan debt. You will be informed about the best debt-management practices and you are eligible for special APhA financial benefits on your student loans.

Step 1: Consolidate or Reconsolidate Your Federal Student Loans

If you haven't consolidated your student loans, you can lower your monthly payments by up to 50% and lock in today's low interest rate. In today's environment of rising interest rates, consolidating at the current low interest rate could save you thousands of dollars in interest over the life of your loan.

The Federal Consolidation Loan Program is a no-fee program with many financial benefits, including the ability to defer your loans during times of financial hardship

and flexible payment plans to support your current financial situation. If you are looking for a way to lower your monthly student loan payments and ensure that your interest rate never increases again, consolidation can greatly improve your financial situation.

If you have already consolidated, but would like to earn special APhA benefits and first-class service, you should reconsolidate as soon as possible. Laws concerning student loan may change soon and this may be your last chance to reconsolidate for cash back and first-class service through the APhA VIP Program.

Step 2: Pay Off Higher Interest Debt

Keep in mind that your federal student loans are simple interest loans. It is a wise financial decision to pay off higher interest debt such as car notes, private student loans, and credit cards before low-interest federal loans. Once you consolidate your federal loans and lower your monthly payment, use your extra disposable income each month to pay off high-interest debt.

Step 3: Earn up to \$4,000 Cash Back

You can earn up to \$4,000 cash back* by consolidating or reconsolidating your loans through the APhA VIP Program with College Loan Corporation. Use your cash to pay off your student loans, buy a new car, go on a vacation, or save for the future!

Your very own VIP consultant is available to discuss your student loan situation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 800-314-0628. You can also visit www.collegeloan.com/apha for more information.

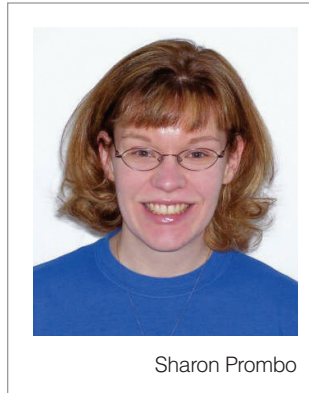
*Borrowers who make payments on time each month for 48 consecutive months will receive a cash rebate equal to 5% of their principal balance outstanding, up to \$4,000. Additional terms and conditions apply; please contact CLC® for details.

Physical Fitness: How to Practice What You Preach

By Sharon Prombo, PharmD

Mr. Smith, a burly, middle-aged gentleman, despondently presents to your pharmacy counter with a new prescription for metformin. While counseling him, he mentions that he has just been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes and he cannot cope with taking another life-long prescription. He notes that he plans on implementing dietary changes to help control his blood sugar, but wonders about additional lifestyle changes to assist in achieving glucose control. While you enthusiastically suggest a regular exercise regimen to help reduce blood sugar and decrease insulin resistance, it hits you—how can you encourage Mr. Smith to tackle this major undertaking when you have not exercised since the 90's, or wait, was that the 80's?

While in pharmacy school, classes, studying, extracurricular activities, and intern work left little, if any, time for a regular exercise routine. Thought that you would have more time to devote to your health and physical fitness as a new pharmacy practitioner? Unfortunately, as you probably have discovered, the demands of pharmacy practice have enveloped most of your time. This creates a dilemma, because you, as a pharmacist, are familiar with the tremendous health benefits of regular physical activity. From reducing the risk of chronic diseases to weight control and an improved mood, a personal commitment to physical fitness can have benefits that extend far beyond increasing your overall wellness. Not only can your dedication to physical fitness help to increase your credibility among patients (i.e., practicing what you preach), but it can also help to empower you to support your patients and to serve as a positive role model in this era of an increasingly overweight/obese population. So, how does a new practitioner continue to meet the demands of pharmacy practice while incorporating a physical activity program?



Sharon Prombo

Although few love the idea of daily exercise, implementing an exercise routine to begin achieving physical fitness does not have to be an insurmountable chore! Understanding current exercise recommendations, dispelling myths, and becoming aware of valuable exercise suggestions and tips can help both you and your patients take a step in the right direction.

Current Exercise Recommendations

While you are probably familiar with past exercise recommendations, including 20 minutes, 3 times per week, or 30 minutes on most days of the week, new, more dramatic suggestions advocate that adults perform 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity on most days to prevent weight gain and 60–90 minutes of daily physical activity to sustain weight loss. Additionally, these same recommendations call for a minimum of 30 minutes of daily activity to reduce the risk of chronic disease.

Dispelling Myths

First of all, since the current exercise recommendations seem quite daunting, it is essential to remember that exercise does not need to consist of all structured activities, such as running or walking. Exercise may also include daily activities like household chores, yard work, or playing

with the kids. Also, these types of aerobic activities are not the only ways to meet the recommendations. Incorporating strength training several times per week can help build strong bones, muscles, and joints while improving fitness. Likewise, recognize that daily exercise does not need to be completed in one session. Shorter sessions can be accumulated throughout the day.

Secondly, it is extremely important to put the concept of physical fitness into perspective. Depending on your age, gender, and medical conditions, the definition of physical fitness can vary dramatically. In summary, physical fitness can be thought of as a combination of cardiovascular fitness, endurance, flexibility, muscular strength, and proper body composition. Being physically fit does not mean that you need to become an elite athlete or a marathon runner! Likewise, exercise alone is not the only key to achieving physical fitness. Exercise is a tool that should be combined with proper nutrition and health habits to maximize health benefits.

Additionally, as with the definition of physical fitness, putting the concept of moderately-intense physical activity into perspective can help make exercise recommendations seem less overwhelming. Moderate physical activity does not mean exercising at an all-out pace and completely exhausting yourself for over an hour. At the recommended moderate pace, you may breathe harder and find it more difficult to talk, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation.

Exercise Suggestions and Tips

Often, it feels as if you can either get fit or fit everything else into your schedule. However, with some planning and creative tips, you can be well on your way to becoming more physically fit. After dispelling some common myths about meeting

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exercise recommendations, it becomes clear that an expensive gym membership, special exercise equipment and clothing, and a full, uninterrupted 60–90 minutes are not required to become physically fit.

First, before trying to assess how much additional activity to incorporate into your routine, consider investing in a pedometer. A pedometer can help you assess your current activity level and assist in tracking progress and setting activity goals. Determine your baseline activity level by averaging the total steps taken over several typical days. Increase slowly, aiming toward 10,000–12,000 steps per day.

Increasing to at least 10,000 steps per day may seem overwhelming, but incorporating some obvious (and extremely beneficial) suggestions to add more physical activity into your day can really send the number of steps taken, calories burned, and time spent exercising soaring. Try raking the leaves, mowing the lawn, using a shovel instead of a snow blower, cleaning the house, parking further away from entrances, taking an activity break at home/work, and walking instead of driving. Furthermore, save some money—and help the environment—by hand-washing your car instead of running it through the wash. This is a great calorie-burning exercise, with 15 minutes of moderate car washing burning an extra 43 kcal! Need a little extra motivation? Try listening to some of your favorite music to keep you moving!

Other less conventional ways to sneak exercise into your routine include doing abdominal exercises at your desk, in a meeting, or while driving. Similarly, stretches,

sit-ups, and push-ups can be done while watching television. Also, take advantage of the time that you spend on your feet at work—an extra 10 minutes of standing per day can prevent several pounds of weight gain during the year.

Ideally, exercise could be combined with work-related responsibilities, thereby allowing you to practice pharmacy and improve your physical fitness simultaneously. As a pharmacist, you are likely to encounter numerous patients with multiple medical conditions that could benefit from increased activity. Since support and encouragement are extremely beneficial in promoting sustained behavioral changes, like daily exercise, starting an exercise club with patients can serve as one aspect of a multi-faceted, innovative disease management program designed to facilitate physical fitness and/or weight management.

Lastly, consider that exercise can also be incorporated into recreation time. Dancing and bowling are just several of the activities that can keep you moving, spending time with friends, and adding variety to your routine.

Heed Honest Abe's Advice

If you are new to exercise, or if you are renewing your commitment to physical activity, appreciate that dramatic changes in physical appearance and fitness level do not happen overnight!

Also, begin with a comfortable and safe routine to reduce the likelihood

of discouragement and injury. Ultimately, be comfortable, listen to your body, eat nutritious foods, and encourage plenty of support from your colleagues, friends, and patients.

This year, when reflecting on your New Year's resolution, take some advice from Abraham Lincoln: "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other." If your resolution is to "practice what you preach," consider that any extra step taken is a step in the right direction.

Sharon Prombo, PharmD, is a community pharmacist for Hy-Vee, Inc. in Des Moines, Iowa. She currently runs 40 miles per week to achieve her fitness goals.





Give Your Credit a Post-Holiday Checkup—and Save Money in 2006

As you survey the damage done to your waistline and wallet by the holidays, why not make January the month you review and repair your credit report and raise your credit score?

Credit scores determine far more about our lives than we realize. Not only do these computerized three-digit measurements of creditworthiness influence how much we'll pay for a credit card or a house or car loan, plenty of non-lenders—such as future employers—like to check that information as well. The average credit score nationwide is 677, while generally, a credit score above 720 is considered attractive to most lenders.

As you start the New Year, it makes sense not only to check your credit report and credit score, but also to understand the proper things to do to maintain the best numbers possible. Some New Year's resolutions for your credit rating:

Get all three credit reports and scores at the same time

You'll have to spend around \$5 to access your credit score, but you can get your credit reports for free at a Web site called annualcreditreport.com. This particular site accesses all three credit bureaus, Experian (www.experian.com), Equifax (www.equifax.com), and TransUnion (www.transunion.com). Respond quickly to inaccuracies in writing either by mail or online, and make sure you do this at the same time every year. It won't affect your credit score if you do this more than once, but it's a good idea to mark a specific time and follow through.

Resolve to pay on time

Yes, it's obvious, but with such busy schedules, many people fail to remember the day to put the checks in the mail so they'll clear on time. Do any of the following. First, get a calendar and when bills come in, mark payment days 5–7 days ahead of due dates so the U.S. Mail gets your payment in on time. Second, check out the electronic bill payment service at your bank—and program in payment reminders so you never forget to push that button.

Get current

If you have missed payments on an account, do whatever it takes to get current and then never let yourself fall behind again. According to myfico.com, the longer you pay bills on time, the better your credit score. Placing your bill payment schedule on a calendar will help.

Understand the problems with your credit

It takes 7 years to remove a collection account from your credit record, even if you've paid it off. Write down the exact month when that mark on your report will be removed, and make sure it happens.

Get rid of balances in sequence

Come up with a beginning of the year plan to pay off credit card balances in a sensible order. There's a temptation to move around outstanding balances if you get a good offer. Sometimes it still makes legitimate sense to do this if it cuts your borrowing cost, but make sure you don't shift balances too often. Focus on paying balances off, the highest-rate ones first.

Limit your credit inquiries

You might get sexy credit card offers and refinancing notices at a rate of five a week, 52 weeks a year, but that doesn't mean you need to check all of them out. In fact, an excess number of credit inquiries can lower your score. Use your January credit review period as part of an overall financial plan for the year that will allow you to investigate credit sensibly if you need to do it at all. And when you do investigate credit, do so within a focused period of time, optimally 2 weeks. And then don't go back to the well for a very long time.

If you do borrow, ask lenders which bureau they use

If you are making an effort to keep your credit in check and your reports accurate, this won't make a lot of difference, but it always pays to ask a potential lender—particularly a mortgage lender—if there is one brand of credit report they favor over others. It's important because you may have a significantly higher or lower score on one report compared to the next one.

Cut up the card—don't close the account

Closing accounts—even those that have had zero balances for years—can be a lousy idea. Lenders want to see a long record of credit management, and longtime accounts that you haven't touched in years may actually help your score because it shows you have some restraint.

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Taking Stock at the Mid-Point

By Tana N. Kaefer, PharmD

As you enter into the second half of your residency year, you should ask yourself this question: Is my residency glass half full or half empty? As a recent community pharmacy residency graduate, I hope to shed some light on where you should be at this stage of your residency year.

Are you on schedule with the goals you set back in July? Is your residency project coming along as planned, or has its progress slowed during the holidays? Have you remembered to update your CV, or has this minor detail been forgotten in the frenzy of other projects? Most importantly, have you thought about what the future holds for you, a bright, successful, soon-to-be graduate of a community pharmacy residency? These are all essential things you should evaluate as you embark on the second half of your residency year.

Discovered a New Niche?

As you roll into the new year, you should take time to reflect on the goals you set back in July and determine where you stand with accomplishing these tasks. Perhaps you have discovered a new niche that interests you, so you have focused more of your time in this area. Maybe you are not quite where you want to be with patient care activities or you have not done as much teaching as you had hoped. This is an important time to reflect on what you have done so far this year, what you still want to do during the next 6 months, and where you want to go after your residency is over. If you find that your interests have changed, modify your goals and make others aware of them. There is still plenty of time to fulfill your goals if you plan accordingly. I cannot stress enough that this year is about you and developing your professional career.



Tana N. Kaefer

Research Project Should Be Underway

At the halfway point, you should definitely be well underway with your research project, if not already collecting data. Remember, your residency is only 1-year long; it can be challenging to create, implement, and publish a research project in this short time frame. Understandably, submitting Institutional Review Board approvals can be extensive and altogether frustrating, but try to see past this obstacle to the bigger picture: this process is a learning experience, especially for residents who may be research naïve like I was. To present your project at the APhA Annual Meeting in March, as most community pharmacy residents do, it is essential that you have already written and submitted your abstract for publication in *JAPhA*. Now you should focus on creating your poster for the poster presentation. Designing a poster can be time-consuming and tedious, especially if it is your first time. Regardless of when you start, I strongly recommend not waiting until the last minute to begin this arduous task.

Continuously Update Your CV

Patient care activities, review articles, presentations, lectures, and volunteering. The list goes on. So many different opportunities arise during your residency year that it can be challenging to keep up with everything you have done. This is why it is important to continuously update your

CV with these experiences as they occur. I learned this lesson the hard way. I essentially forgot about my CV after I applied for residencies, and by the time I realized my mishap, I found it difficult to recall some of my activities from the beginning of the residency. If your CV is not current, start updating it now and never neglect it again. You never know when appealing job opportunities may arise, so you always want to be prepared.

Use Residency to Propel Your Career

If you have not already begun to do so, you should definitely start thinking now about your future after your residency program. You have taken a progressive step forward by completing a community pharmacy residency. Use this experience to propel you into your pharmacy career and you will not be disappointed. With the recent implementation of the Medicare Modernization Act and subsequent payment for medication therapy management services, this is an exciting time for the pharmacy profession. The need for innovative pharmacists has never been greater, so use your residency experience to set you apart from others.

The first step in searching for a job after your residency is to talk with your mentors about their knowledge and experiences. This may be your residency director, your preceptors, or other pharmacists with whom you have contact. I realized early in my residency that I was surrounded by smart, motivated leaders in the pharmacy profession. These individuals had many years of pharmacy experience under their belts, and I knew they could help me move forward in my career. Learn from your mentors' past experiences and use the valuable knowledge they share. These mentors know your strengths, and if you make them aware of what you want to accomplish, they can help you find a job that suits you and will allow you to grow and develop as a new pharmacist. Your mentors are often aware of job openings

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Finding Funding for Innovative Ideas

By Nicole M. Petersen, PharmD, BCPS

When practitioners first step into a new environment, innovative ideas often follow. Whether the innovation is a novel way to increase patient safety or a new patient care program, it takes time, dedication, and money to implement the ideas. You may find yourself with the first two. But begging your boss to attend a training program or develop marketing materials may be less than ideal. The good news is funding for innovative ideas is available if you know where to look.

What to Explore Before You Seek Funding

Before addressing where to find funding, you should consider the qualifying criteria for receiving certain grants. One significant limitation may be company profit status. Many funding sources prefer or require awards to be issued to a non-profit company. If this is the case, you may be able to collaborate with a non-profit group, such as a college of pharmacy or local coalition.

Another factor to explore is reporting requirements. While some grants only require a report or two, others require extensive documentation that needs to be developed or will force you to hire additional help. This will need to be considered in the budget. Realize, however, the grant provider may restrict salary reimbursement for personnel associated with the innovation.

Involving certain populations in your innovation may increase your opportunities to find funding. You should be able to expand your search to include associations, foundations, and businesses, depending on the population. For instance, colleges of pharmacy prefer to provide funding to projects that involve their students. Some funding doors, particularly from governmental sources, may be opened if the inno-

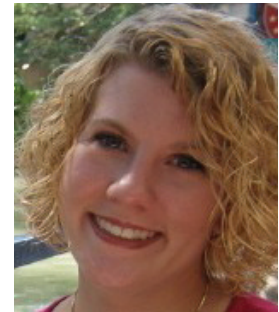
vation involves underserved populations. Likewise, if your idea involves multidisciplinary professionals, you might increase your opportunities.

Lastly, consider all components of your innovation. Are you involving technology? Consider approaching a technology company. Perhaps instead of monetary resources, you could ask for equipment and technology support. If you are planning on publishing an idea, involve a publishing company from the beginning.

Options to Get Idea Funded

Depending on the project, the following are options you may pursue to get your idea funded.

- **APhA Foundation Incentive Grants for Innovations in Pharmaceutical Care:** The APhA Foundation provides \$1,000 grants, awarded once a year, for residents, practitioners, and federal pharmacists. There are also specific opportunities for projects with a focus on pain management and Alzheimer's disease/dementia. See more information at www.aphafoundation.org.
- **Other pharmacy foundations:** The Community Pharmacy Foundation (www.communitypharmacyfoundation.org) is an organization whose primary purpose is to assist community pharmacy practitioners by providing resources for research and development to encourage new capabilities and continuous improvements in the delivery of patient care. Other pharmacy organizations may also have foundations that will provide grants. Check their Web sites.
- **Pharmaceutical manufacturers:** Although these opportunities are not necessarily published anywhere, you can ask for funding from



Nicole Petersen

pharmaceutical manufacturers. They may pay for consulting fees, educational opportunities, or other expenses included in the budget. A community pharmacist in Iowa received a grant for the cost of a bone density measurement device. Another community chain received funding to bring in an expert for training pharmacists about Alzheimer's disease.

How do you find the opportunity? Determine companies that have a stake in your innovation. Consider brand and generic manufacturers. Network at annual meetings, or just ask your local pharmaceutical representative. The representative may be able to point you in the right direction, and let you know what the company will and will not be able to fund. Someone from within the company may be a powerful ally in receiving the funding.

- **Colleges or schools of pharmacy:** Does your idea foster student learning? Take it to the dean and determine if there are opportunities for funding. If specific funding is not available, you may ask about other resources such as classroom space, equipment rental, or use of faculty expertise.
- **Local business coalition:** Finding a sponsor for your idea may be easy when you go to those with money! Find out when the local business coalition meets. Offer to do a health fair or screening at the next meeting in exchange for support for your idea.

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- **Foundations:** Foundations come in all sorts and sizes. Finding them may be more of a challenge. Scan local publications for fundraisers and attend to see if there are opportunities. Use the Internet to Google “foundations” in addition to your city, state, or area of research to find more. Even if a foundation appears to be primarily for patient assistance, it does not hurt to contact and talk with them. They may have some new ideas for you.
- **Area Agencies on Aging (AAA):** The University of Illinois at Chicago partnered with the AAA, and a once small innovative idea has become a large program with sustained impact and positive patient outcomes.
- **Governmental sources:** Highly competitive governmental sources (for instance from the NIH or CDC) require a track record to fund large projects.
- **Networking thru your local and national associations:** APhA and your state or local pharmacy associations may help you find opportunities, but don’t forget the multidisciplinary associations. If your innovation involves diabetes, find out if there is a local chapter of the American Diabetes Association and the American Association of Diabetes Educators, as well as a local Diabetes Coalition (if one exists).
- **Partner with a self-insured employer group:** Provide a service and they pay you. This may not sound innovative, but this revenue source is not being taken advantage of as much as it could. Can you provide the service on their turf? Even better!

Where else can you find money? Ask the experts by going to the Poster Presentations at the APhA Annual Meeting in San Francisco and talk with those who are providing the services.

Nicole Petersen, PharmD, BCPS, is an assistant professor of pharmacy practice and a community clinical pharmacist at St. Louis College of Pharmacy and Schnucks Pharmacy.

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and can put in a good word for you, so be sure to heed the advice of those who are there to help you succeed. Never underestimate the power of networking.

The Residency Glass is Overflowing

I hope some of my advice will help you as you enter into the second half of your residency year. Your choice to complete a community pharmacy residency is sure to advance your career to the next level. I encourage you to stay active with your pharmacy organizations, both local and national. Maintain a positive attitude and

stay motivated. All of these things are sure to keep your residency glass not only half full, but overflowing with experience and knowledge.

Please let me know how your residency is going. Contact me at tana.kaefer@rairx.com and introduce yourself.

Tana N. Kaefer, PharmD, is clinical coordinator at Richmond Apothecaries Inc., in Richmond, Va.

CE Weekend Survey Raffle Prize Winner Announced!

Congratulations to **Jill Anderson** of LeMars, Iowa, winner of the APhA New Practitioner CE Weekend Survey raffle prize! Jill received a \$50 gift certificate to the APhA Bookstore. Thank you to all who completed the online survey. Your feedback has been beneficial to our CE Weekend planning.

Sidestep.com

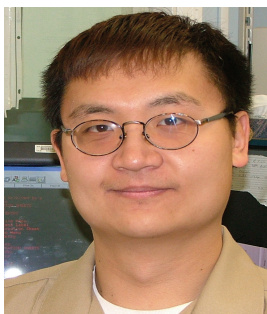
By Lt. Jerry Zee, PharmD

Pharmacists travel quite a bit for conferences and business meetings, not to mention vacations and family gatherings. Flights are typically reserved through either Orbitz.com, Travelocity.com, Priceline.com, and/or Expedia.com. How come? Well, it's obvious, since these sites do plenty of commercials and thus, are well known. I am sure you must have come across one, if not all, of these sites already.

In fact, I have used all of them, and found them user-friendly. Yet, I have found out that there are some airlines that are excluded from all of these Web sites because some airlines do not have contracts or alliances with them. This means you may not get the best price for your buck.

Of course, you may check four, five, or even six different Web sites for deals, but it is tedious work and time consuming to say the least. If you are a frequent flier and a bargain hunter like me, this can be frustrating.

Thankfully, there are now a variety of Web sites that call themselves travel search engines. These sites operate like a one-stop shop that do not consult the travel agent database to find bookings. Instead, the sites search hotel, car rental, and airline Web sites to gather all the available prices listed, including the special exclusive offers. To put it in plain language, these sites operate like Google.



Lt. Jerry Zee

The one site I find super useful is sidestep.com. Sidestep.com searches a wide variety of different travel suppliers for you and features results from 585 domestic and international airlines, more than 90,000 hotel properties, and more than 2,800 rental car locations. In addition, sidestep.com searches online travel agencies such as Orbitz and OneTravel, consolidators such as Airfare.com and Hotels.com, and the sites of the travel providers themselves—airlines such as JetBlue Airways and Continental Airlines, hotels such as Holiday Inn and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, and car rental companies such as Thrifty and Dollar. The awesome part is that since sidestep.com is not part of the travel agent database, it does not charge

fees for every booking as other online agencies do. Similar to Google, sidestep.com charges companies to be highlighted in its search results or lets them buy onscreen ads while a search is in progress. After the search is done, you may click on a listing and it will send you directly to the home page of the company that offers this deal, where you may then purchase your fare. Of course, just like anything else, there is a caveat to using sidestep.com: you need to download their software from their site in order to use their features. Other than that, it's great!

Maximizes Time and Money

A decade ago, the concept of booking airfares, making reservations for hotels and renting a vehicle via the Internet seemed like trying to understand a foreign language. Now, it is not a big deal at all. Nevertheless, maximizing efficient use of time and money will always remain the most significant issues anywhere, and this Web site will do just that for your regular travel purposes!

Lt. Jerry Zee, PharmD, is a staff pharmacist for the Indian Health Service in Omak, Wash.



To Involve or Not to Involve: Advocacy from a New Practitioner's Perspective

By Hoai-An Truong, PharmD

To be (involved) or not to be (involved). That is the question. "Why me?" is usually, if not always, the question. Then there are also the thoughts to justify your lack of involvement: "I am a new practitioner. I will be involved later when I get more time and money." "Other pharmacists are involved. I don't know how to, but someone else is advocating for pharmacy already." "Well, APhA is doing it already!" Perhaps you are unconsciously trying to convince yourself not to be involved. What if someone asks and challenges you: "Why not now? It's now or never." May I offer you that challenge, also? Not next year, next month, next week, or next day, but now, at this moment. Other pharmacists are involved and advocating for pharmacy, but the problem is that they are not "S_CCESSF_L" yet, because they cannot spell the word without "U" in it! Of course, you will ask "Why me? Why should I?" Allow me to tell you why.

Why Should I Be Involved?

Pharmacists often answer patients' questions by asking them more questions prior to providing responses. For example, when a patient seeks an OTC product for coughing, a pharmacist will always find out whether the patient has dry or productive cough, other medical conditions, or associated symptoms before making an appropriate recommendation. Sometimes the best answers or ways to formulate responses are to ask more questions.

With that in mind, I ask if you would give serious thought to these questions before reading about my attempt to convince you to get involved and advocate for the pharmacy profession.

- What do I want to change about pharmacy practice?
- How can I help to change pharmacy practice?
- What are the benefits of being involved for me and my profession?
- Why shouldn't I be involved?
- Who will speak for pharmacy if I don't?

I will try my best to respond to the question "Why should I be involved?" by sharing with you my "5 RPh's—5 Reasons Pharmacists Should Advocate for Pharmacy."

RPh 5—Nature of the Pharmacy Profession

I remember reading an article on advocating for pharmacy in which there was a statement from Stephen R. Ehardt, a pharmacist-legislator who serves in the Michigan House of Representatives. In that article, Ehardt was quoted as saying that "The nature of the [pharmacy] profession has great involvement with government. [Pharmacists] should not complain about professional licensure and their work environment if they are not going to be politically involved to change it." I think that this statement says it all regarding advocating for pharmacy.

RPh 4—Current National and State Issues Affecting Pharmacy Practice

Being so busy in the workplace or with new jobs, it can be difficult for new practitioners to keep up with pharmacy legislation and regulations. Several pharmacy issues are currently affecting or will be



Hoai-An Truong

shaping pharmacy practice include Medicare, medication therapy management services, drug re-importation, mail orders, emergency contraception dispensing, immunizations/medication administration, collaborative practice/drug therapy management, pharmacy technicians registration, etc. It is important for pharmacists to be knowledgeable of these pharmacy issues, which have significant effect on pharmacy practice, and be involved to advocate for changes that are in the best interests of the profession. Anything you do and/or advocate for will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on pharmacy practice.

RPh 3—Future of the Pharmacy Profession

I know that you have occasionally thought about the future of pharmacy. A good way to predict the future is by reflecting on and learning from the past. Thinking back in recent years, I am sure that all of you remember the passage of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003. Time flies! We have just rung in the new year with its implementation. Although pharmacists now have a provider status and can receive cognitive fee-for-services under Medicare Part D, there are still laws limiting pharmacists' roles and thus, preventing their full potential. Pharmacists are working to shape the future of pharmacy on a daily basis. Kathleen Collier, PharmD, of the University of Arizona, wrote in an

continued on page 12

article on pharmacy advocacy that “In order to play an active role in shaping the future of the pharmacy profession, pharmacists must be able to anticipate the changes in the nation’s health care industry and seize opportunities to improve community and patient health care.”

RPh 2—Pharmacist’s Oath

It is possible that some of you, either on graduation or licensing day, were so excited by the fact that you finally became a “PharmD” after a long hard grind in pharmacy school that you forgot something important. Although some of you may recall reciting the Pharmacist’s Oath or having it framed and hung up in your home or workplace, others may have forgotten about it. In that case, I remind you that part of the oath includes a statement “I will embrace and advocate change in the profession of pharmacy that improves patient care.”

RPh 1—As Pharmacists, You Are Pharmacy’s Voice!

If the first four of the “5 RPh’s” have not convinced you enough to be involved and advocate for the pharmacy profession, then I will try one more time and hope that you will also convince yourself. Please be involved in one way or another during your pharmacy career because as pharmacists, you are pharmacy’s voice. And as an added bonus, being involved can also provide you with opportunities for networking, a career change, and work and personal satisfaction.

How Can I Be Involved?

Hopefully, you have just convinced yourself or at least seriously considered to be involved and advocate for the pharmacy profession. Now what? You may ask, “How can I be involved?” I want to share with you a few ways to be involved and advocate for pharmacy, all of which I have been very fortunate and grateful to learn from pharmacy faculty advisors and leaders through my involvement and activities.

Dispensing information and serving as resources. Pharmacists are the drug information experts. Not only that, I believe that pharmacists are also the health communication channels among patients, physicians, other health care providers, and even the general public. Being the drug information experts and most accessible health care providers, pharmacists are naturally talented with providing information and serving as resources for others. From that perspective, you should always share with patients, other health care providers, and especially legislators about pharmacists’ specialized knowledge and roles in health care, which are certainly not “counting by 5’s” as perceived by the public. Additionally, new practitioners should advocate by providing information on pharmacy issues and offering to serve as a resource for legislators, patients, and other health care providers. As Dean David A. Knapp, PhD, of the University of Maryland–Baltimore (UMB) School of Pharmacy says, it is important to “Never underestimate people’s intelligence, or overestimate their information.” Finally, I believe that although some people often associate advocacy with legislators or politics, advocating for pharmacy can simply be talking to patients and other health care providers.

Seizing and providing opportunities.

Pharmacists are fortunate to have numerous opportunities for leadership and professional development, and in contributing to pharmacy advocacy. As a leader or an active member in national or state pharmacy organizations, you can organize legislative activities and events to increase awareness for pharmacy. For example, during the legislative session, the Maryland Pharmacy Coalition, which includes four state pharmacy organizations and the school of pharmacy, organizes a Pharmacy Legislative Day in Annapolis. Each year, two buses take pharmacists and student pharmacists to the State House to meet with their district legislators and discuss pharmacy issues.

As a pharmacy faculty or preceptor, you can also provide opportunities for student pharmacists to be involved in pharmacy advocacy. For example, Cynthia Boyle, PharmD, director of the experiential learning program at the UMB School of Pharmacy, helped me develop a Legislative Experiential Elective course, where students are assigned to a pharmacist–legislator or government official to learn about the legislative process. Another mentoring example was when Howard Schiff, executive director of the Maryland Pharmacists Association, taught me about legislation, hearings, and pharmacy advocacy during my rotation.

Because these experiences have undoubtedly cultivated my interest in pharmacy advocacy, I really hope that you and other pharmacists will provide similar opportunities for student pharmacists.

Adding Your Voice

In addition to all the suggestions and options discussed above, you can also advocate for pharmacy by joining pharmacy organizations and their action e-mail lists. National and state pharmacy organizations provide you with a voice and professional representation in legislature and you can always obtain resources for pharmacy advocacy by signing-up for legislative e-mail lists on APhA’s Government Affairs section at www.aphanet.org.

After reading this article, I hope you have decided to be involved, or at least will seriously consider to be involved, and advocate for pharmacy. With great passion for pharmacy, I leave you with my new acronym “PHARMACY”: **Pharmacists Have A Responsibility—Must Advocate for Change in Your pharmacy profession!**

Hoai-An Truong, PharmD, is a community pharmacy resident at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy in Baltimore and Happy Harry’s Pharmacy in Perryville, Md., and 2005–2006 chair of the Transitions Editorial Advisory Board.

Transitioning from Pharmacy School to Graduate School

By Leticia R. Moczygemba, PharmD

Transitioning from the PharmD program, which is very structured and focused, to graduate school, which offers more independence and flexibility to make choices that match your career goals, is challenging. In addition to being a brand new graduate student, you may also find yourself in the role of a teaching assistant and practicing pharmacy for the first time. Juggling all three of these responsibilities and trying to meet your career goals can be demanding, but once you embrace your independence and begin exploring areas that interest you, graduate school can be one of the best experiences in your career. Networking, setting goals, finding balance between school and your personal life, and taking time to enjoy graduate school can all help to facilitate the transition from pharmacy school to graduate school.

Networking and Mentors

Networking is an important component of graduate school. Take time to network with faculty early in graduate school. This will make choosing a committee for your thesis or dissertation easier when the time comes. It is also important to network among fellow graduate students. Talking to other graduate students who are ahead of you in the program or even former graduates of your program can help you when choosing classes or need advice about taking a research position. Networking will also open the doors for you to be included on projects or other opportunities, such as internships. Also, try to join at least one professional organization. This will expand your network and keep you current with pharmacy issues. Networking will also be important when the time comes for you to begin the job search.

In addition to networking, mentors are invaluable to help you throughout graduate school. You may find that you have several mentors throughout graduate school.

One mentor may be a faculty member in your department who you can turn to for advice about projects. Another may be a graduate student who is ahead of you in the program. If you are a graduate student who is also practicing pharmacy, having a mentor to turn to when you need advice about how to handle a difficult patient situation can give you reassurance as a new practitioner. Remember, you can also be a mentor to PharmD students and other graduate students as you progress through the program.

Setting Goals

Setting goals in graduate school is pivotal to moving forward in your program. You may be working on multiple papers at once and semester-long projects. To prevent assignments from piling up at the end of the semester and project deadlines from creeping up on you, set weekly goals. At the end of the week, write down what you have accomplished to track progress of your projects. Learning to track your weekly progress early in the program will also help you stay focused when writing your thesis or dissertation. In addition to weekly goals, write down your long-term career goals. Re-evaluate your long-term goals at the end of each semester to note your progress and make any changes if necessary.

Balance

As graduate school progresses, more opportunities arise, and it seems like you get busier and busier. It is easy to get caught

up in deadlines and before you know it, another semester has come and gone. In addition to classes, you may be practicing pharmacy part-time and have teaching assistant responsibilities. Without even realizing it, you may have been neglecting yourself, family, and friends. While there is always work to do in graduate school, you must find a balance between your work and personal life. This includes learning how to say no if you truly cannot fit one more commitment into your schedule. Just like you schedule meetings or time for projects, remember to schedule time for yourself, and family and friends.

Have Fun!

Graduate school should be a time for you to explore your interests and find new ones. Choose projects that excite you. If a project does not peak your interest, you may not want to invest the time or energy it requires. Try to get involved with projects that interest you and coincide with your long-term goals. Take advantage of opportunities that will positively impact your career. Most importantly, enjoy your time in graduate school and use it as a stepping stone to the next phase of your career.

Leticia R. Moczygemba, PharmD, is a second-year doctoral student in the division of pharmacy administration at the University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy.



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